

The Sunday School.

LESSON FOR AUGUST 29.

Paul Opposed at Ephesus. Acts 19:21-34.

Golden Text.—Take heed and beware of covetousness. Luke 12:15.

Lesson Thought.—The spirit of selfishness is one of the greatest hindrances to the spread of the Gospel.

INTRODUCTION.

The last regular lesson from the Acts was taken from chapter 18:1-11. This one begins with Acts 19:21. It will be important to get at least a part of this intervening history. 1. Learn all about the city of Ephesus. 2. Acts 18:8-28 tells all about the founding of the church at Ephesus. 3. In chapter 19:1-7 we read about the re-baptism of the twelve disciples whom Paul found there and who were ignorant of the workings of the Holy Spirit. 4. Acts 19:8-17 tells about Paul's three years' work at Ephesus, three months in the synagogue and two years in the lecture room of a professor named Tyrannus. God blest the labors of Paul here as elsewhere and a great work was done. Verses 18-20 relate to the great sacrifices some of the people made who accepted Christianity.

INSTRUCTION.

1. *Ungodly Gains.*—In the introduction we noticed the wonderful sacrifices people made for Christ's sake. Here we see how the Gospel interferes with men's ungodly gains. Demetrius and his crew were engaged in making silver shrines for the goddess Diana. This brought them large gains as may be seen from the statement, "by this shall we have our wealth." Those who accepted Christianity would of course renounce idolatry and would have no more use for these silver shrines. Thus it interfered with their business but it was a business that did not help the public any. Christianity does not interfere with any legitimate business; it helps it. Demetrius did not consider the good that was being done thro the preaching of the Gospel; he was concerned only for his own gain. The saloon-keepers can have no interest in morality, in religion, in churches, in fact in no enterprise that makes for the betterment of humanity, because the saloon is directly opposed to everything that makes for purity, morality and the general good of the community. The saloon is an institution of the devil, the church is an institution of God, and when you support the one you oppose the other. You can not support both not any more than you can travel east and west at one and the same time. With the growth and spread of pure and undefiled religion the saloon must go down.

2. *The Wild Mob.*—Note that it was not only their craft that was in danger, but their religion also. Demetrius made a happy hit when he referred to the fact that the great goddess Diana was in danger of losing her magnificence. The two went hand in hand. The decline of religion would aid in the decline of their trade. The one was dependent upon the other. Reference to their religion stirred up the whole multitude and the city was turned into confusion and riot.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

1. *A Wide Outlook.*—Paul took a broad view of his mission as a minister specially called to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles. Having visited and established churches in many prominent towns and cities, he now determines to go to Rome also, for he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians." He was not satisfied with his life work until he had carried the Gospel to the capital of the Roman Empire. He was not ashamed of the Gospel. He declared it to be the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. The missionary spirit of the apostle needs to be revived in the heart of the Christian church today. We need to take the same broad view of the world as did the apostle Paul; we too are debtors to the heathen and we can not carry out the great commission in every particular without a special effort to preach the Gospel to all the world.

2. *Great Confusion.*—While at Ephesus Paul continued preaching the Gospel with great power. The whole city was stirred up from the center to the circumference. The people declared that Paul was turning the world upside down. Then followed a regular panic, the whole town being thrown into utter confusion. The people did not know what they were doing. Some cried one thing and some another. What was the trouble? The Gospel had struck at the root of the great wickedness in that city and it touched the people's pocketbooks. Thousands of books of magic were brought by their owners and as a willing sacrifice burned in a bonfire. The amount of these books is valued at \$75,000 so that the sacrifice was by no means a small one. The people also forsook the goddess Diana and accepted Christianity. This was detrimental to the gains of the people and of course raised great opposition. As it was in the days of Paul so it is today. When the Gospel touches the root of man's wicked designs and threatens to destroy their business then begins the cry that Christians interfere with other people's business. Take the liquor business as an example. No one can preach the Gos-

pel faithfully without arousing the opposition of the saloon, for the whole liquor business is entirely antagonistic to the very spirit of Christianity.

THINGS WE SHOULD DO.

- 1 Give up all bad habits and business.
- 2 Show your faith by your works.
- 3 Cultivate a love for lost souls.
- 4 Proclaim the Word with boldness.
- 5 Keep faithful amid any danger.
- 6 Renounce every form of idolatry.

OUR BOYS.

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The merry, frolicsome, noisy boy! O! how we love them, and how anxious we are that they shall grow up to be wise, good, loved of God and honored by men. How many realize that God loves to have his children happy, to see them enjoying themselves? "God's heart holds mother love," and what mother's heart is not gladdened by her children's pleasure. At one time the idea of a Holy life was that of the cloister. All young things are playful and if young lives are intrusted to us we must not try to cramp them too much into old forms, but by careful study of the different dispositions pray earnestly for wisdom to guide and direct, in short,—be a "balance-wheel" to these young inexperienced souls.

The foundation of a boy's character is laid at home. The boy whose mother represents all that is upright, frank and true cannot but be good himself, or at any rate cannot go very far wrong. The cry of the boys all over this land is for thoughtful, sympathetic mothers. Aye! and fathers too. Fathers who are careful to hide away their own imperfections from their children, fathers who are sincere, honest from principle, fathers who are directed in action, conversation, in the every-day walks of life by the one who said; "Be ye perfect." The mother's sphere of influence over her boy begins before his birth and ends at the grave, only, perhaps her influence is more clearly defined in aiding his choice in reading than in anything except his general behavior. The boy born with a love of books is the possessor of a little kingdom all his own, secure and happy. He is seldom dissatisfied, and less often disagreeable. The mother is the potent influence that holds the boy in healthy and happy occupation under the paternal roof during the evenings of his youth, her supervision of his evenings at home should be felt not seen by the